

Sarah Wayson dies in Vegas murder-suicide: Victim was daughter of late prominent attorney

The Capital (Annapolis, Maryland)

September 17, 2009 Thursday

Copyright 2009 Capital Gazette Communications, Inc.

Distributed by McClatchy-Tribune Business News

Section: STATE AND REGIONAL NEWS

Length: 892 words

Byline: Heather Rawlyk, The Capital, Annapolis, Md.

Body

Sep. 17--The daughter of a prominent Annapolis attorney and gaming industry lobbyist was found dead Monday afternoon in an apparent murder-suicide in her south Las Vegas Valley home.

Sarah Elizabeth Wayson, 29, a graduate of Annapolis High School, and her boyfriend, Eric Austin Bray, 40, were found by a housekeeper at about 1 p.m., Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department officials said. The couple had been in the home since late Friday or Saturday, police said.

Wayson, found on the couch, died of multiple gunshot wounds and her death was ruled a homicide, a spokeswoman for the Clark County Coroner's Office said. Bray, discovered upstairs, died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head, the coroner said. His death was ruled a suicide.

Police have not released a motive.

Wayson came from a prominent south county family. Her father, the late Edward O. Wayson Jr., was a fixture in south county politics, business and development. He died of heart failure in 2004.

The family ran a series of businesses in south county at what is now referred to as Waysons Corner. And the Morgan B. and Martha O. Wayson Pavilion at Anne Arundel Medical Center in Parole is named in their honor after a \$1 million donation made by the family.

The Wayson family declined to comment.

News of Sarah Wayson's death shocked and saddened her many friends in Anne Arundel County and the Las Vegas Valley. Wayson graduated from Annapolis High School in 1998. It is unclear when she moved to Nevada.

Amber Wilkinson of Annapolis said she went to high school with Wayson and the two worked together at Graul's Market on Taylor Avenue in Annapolis.

"The things I will remember most about her are her big smile, infectious laugh, and how she was always willing to share things she had been through in hopes of helping others," she said.

Wilkinson said Wayson had a hard time coping with her father's death.

"She had been through a lot in the past few years and had worked so hard to get her life headed in the direction she wanted and was just beginning to see some of her dreams come to fruition," she said. "I was someone who was inspired by her and enjoyed her presence."

Sarah Wayson dies in Vegas murder-suicide: Victim was daughter of late prominent attorney

Brian Kay of Las Vegas, a close friend, said many people are still in shock over her death.

"She had every reason to live and everything to look forward to," Kay said.

Friends said she enrolled at the University of Nevada Las Vegas last year to take courses to become a teacher. She began student-teaching at a Las Vegas middle school in late August.

"At the end of 2008, Sarah was determined to become a schoolteacher," said friend Seth Schorr of Las Vegas. "She went back to school herself to get the necessary degrees and landed a job in Florida that she was excited to take this December. Sarah loved working with kids."

Kay, who said she met Wayson in Las Vegas two years ago, said Wayson was "tremendously excited" to move to south Florida to take the teacher's position.

Kay said Wayson often spoke about her many friends and family in Anne Arundel County. He said Wayson was planning a trip to Annapolis for her sister's wedding, and was excited about visiting her old stomping grounds.

"She had a lot of friends, and I think a lot of people considered her their best friend," Kay said. "She had a lot of love for people and people in turn had a lot of love for her. There's a hole in hundreds of people's hearts right now."

Schorr said Wayson touched many people in a short amount of time.

"Sarah was known as a sweet girl (with) a quirky sense of humor" he said. "She had an infectious laugh and lived her life transparently. With Sarah, what you see is what you get."

Jessica Schwartz of Annapolis called Wayson "inspiring."

"Sarah was an inspiration to all her friends for her strength, especially after her father's death, and her belief that you can always make a positive change in your life," she said. "She had a great sense of humor. I loved going out with her when we were both home at Thanksgiving. She could make people laugh like nobody else."

F. Joan Striegel of Glen Burnie recalled meeting a young Wayson at Maryland Hall in the early 1990s. Striegel was student coordinator for Edward Stewart's "Nutcracker" at the Ballet Theatre of Maryland.

"Sarah auditioned for a part, which she got," Striegel said. "I thought at the time she was an incredibly striking little girl. She was very quiet, but I always felt drawn to her."

Over the years, Striegel said she lost track of Wayson.

"But (I) was surprised one day to receive a friend request on Facebook," she said. "Somehow, she found me on there. I loved seeing her posts and photos and rejoiced in the beautiful, successful woman she had become."

A "celebration of life" will be held to remember Wayson at the Wynn Las Vegas on Sunday, where she once worked. The Wayson family has ties with Las Vegas mogul Steve Wynn.

Wynn got his start at Wayson's Bingo in Lothian, and Edward O. Wayson Jr. was his legal adviser for many years.

To see more of The Capital or to subscribe to the newspaper, go to <http://www.hometownannapolis.com>. Copyright (c) 2009, The Capital, Annapolis, Md. Distributed by McClatchy-Tribune Information Services. For reprints, email tmsreprints@permissionsgroup.com, call 800-374-7985 or 847-635-6550, send a fax to 847-635-6968, or write to The Permissions Group Inc., 1247 Milwaukee Ave., Suite 303, Glenview, IL 60025, USA.

Load-Date: September 18, 2009